

TRU TeamWorks

February 24, 2005

Tools

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By the Numbers

Shipments

Scheduled to arrive
02/27/05 - 03/05/05:

Hanford - 2
INL - 4
RFETS - 17
SRS - 4

(subject to change)

3,370 total shipments
received as of 02/23/05

Disposal

Waste disposed as of
02/23/05:

4,314 standard waste
boxes
1,319 ten-drum
overpacks
60,290 waste drums

26,707 cubic meters



The Big Story:

For the record

The story behind the demonstration of a new WIPP records center ...



Operations:

WIPP's workhorse

A one-of-a-kind hoist for a one-of-a-kind facility ...



Operations:

Tightening our belts

Belted Six Sigma managers work to perfect WIPP processes ...



Working Smart:

Take my advice

Ten tips for ergonomic health ...



Safety & Security:

Get to know Craig ...

An interview with WIPP's not-so-new safety manager ...



Our Team:

Team tales

WIPP team news and information ...



TRU TeamWorks is a biweekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team

WIPP hosts legislative update breakfast in Santa Fe



New Mexico State Senator Carroll Leavell, WTS General Manager Dick Raaz, Representative Joe Stell and CBFO Deputy Manager Lloyd Piper confer prior to CBFO's annual New Mexico legislative update breakfast in Santa Fe.

Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Environmental Management Inés Triay provided a WIPP status report. The event was hosted by southeast New Mexico legislators on February 10.

W I P P h a s
n o l o g o !

W e f e e l
a
c o n t e s t
c o m i n g
o n ...

TRU TeamWorks will soon be hosting a WIPP slogan and logo contest, that will be open to all WIPP team members.

Watch for more information on this exciting opportunity -

coming soon!

One for the record

Inspired by a 1996 records conference in Washington, D.C., CBFO Chief Information Officer Meg Milligan returned to Carlsbad with an idea – one that's come full circle. Last week, WTS announced the award of a subcontract to Science & Engineering Associates of Albuquerque to demonstrate its ability to scan and digitize WIPP hard copy and microfilm records and post them to the Internet in a user-friendly format – a first step in the Records Center Project to be located in Carlsbad.

Milligan's interest in a long-term WIPP records center spans nine years. "Shortly after I returned from that conference, the records officer at RFETS, who also attended the conference, called me and said they had 35,000 boxes of WIPP-related records we needed to take care of.

Budgets were tight. But in the following months I contacted other generator sites and discovered there were about 125,000 boxes of WIPP records that would need to be dispositioned."

At the time, Milligan says federal agencies were sending records to 48 federal records centers around the country. The problem, she explained, is that boxes of records have different disposition schedules and related records were often separated, creating problems with chains of custody. Some records centers had already reached capacity and were no longer accepting records.

Four years ago, Milligan attended a Nuclear Records Managers Association meeting. "I was thrilled. Kodak demonstrated a machine that could scan and digitize 328 pages per minute, double-sided, in full color and in four formats: HTML, PDF, GIF and Word."

**"The next step
will not be
insignificant."**

In 2001, DOE-HQ got the ball rolling. With the support of local and political leaders, language was added to the 2003 and 2004 Energy and Water appropriations bills to fund the initial phase of the Records Center Project.

The next phase "will not be insignificant," says Gary Beyer, WTS project manager for the demonstration phase. "The successful bidder for the future phase will need to interface with generator sites to define what constitutes a WIPP record, estimate record quantities and develop a system to National Archive and NQA-1 quality standards for long-term records management . . . and then design a facility."

Depending on the success of these first steps and the availability of funds, the records center Milligan envisioned will become a reality.



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All that glitters ...

A South African gold mine boasts the world's deepest single-drop shaft at 9,812 feet from the collar. If gold miners descended at the same rate as WIPP crews, it would take nearly 20 minutes to reach the bottom of the shaft.

Disposal
One of a kind

The distinctive silhouette of the WIPP site on the horizon is marked by a five-story enclosure built around the waste hoist head frame. This modern hoist system serves as WIPP's main mode of transport to the underground for waste, personnel and materials.



A view of the waste hoist drum. Note the six head-ropes, which raise or lower the conveyance as the drum rolls.

Unlike the air intake and salt shaft hoists at WIPP, the waste hoist was designed and built specifically for this project. When it was installed in 1986, it was the largest capacity friction hoist in the world. And though it is no longer the biggest, WIPP's waste hoist is the only mine hoist in the U.S. that transports nuclear materials.

The WIPP waste hoist is equipped with six head-ropes and uses a counterweight and three tail-ropes for balance. The conveyance moves at a maximum speed of 500 feet-per-minute and has a load capacity of 45 tons that can be distributed on its two-deck cage.

Three people operate the hoist. Two are shaft tenders; one at the bottom station and one at the shaft collar on the surface. The third person is the hoist operator, who monitors hoist operation from a control room near the collar. While hoist controls are computerized, the main method of communication between the hoist operator and the shaft tenders is still the time-honored bell system. When a shaft tender is ready to move the conveyance, he signals his intent by ringing a bell in a distinctive pattern.



Tommy Ritchie, WTS, calibrates hoist equipment.



Ed "Red" Keyser on duty in the waste hoist control room.

The hoist is normally operated in a semi-automatic mode which allows either the station or the collar shaft tender to start the hoist. The hoist control system then automatically slows and stops the cage at exactly floor level. The hoist operator can also intervene to take over the hoist operation at any time.

As with all systems at WIPP, safety during the operation and maintenance of the waste hoist is priority one. Redundant systems are in place in case of emergencies. One example is the six head-rope arrangement. Any one of the six ropes is capable of holding a fully loaded cage.

Preventive maintenance is performed on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis to keep the hoist in top condition. To ensure the hoist can continue to provide dependable service throughout the life of the project, periodic equipment upgrades will be considered. Control system changes, proposed for this fall, would replace obsolete components and enhance system self-diagnostic functions.



Looking down on the waste hoist motor (left) and drum.

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WIPP hosts math recognition banquet

CBFO Deputy Manager Lloyd Piper and Paul Shoemaker, acting director of SNL's Nuclear and Risk Technologies Center 6800, welcomed seven Carlsbad students, along with their parents, math teachers and principals to a recent banquet in the WIPP auditorium. The students were recognized for high scores in the first annual Carlsbad "Go Figure" mathematical challenge exam.

Carlsbad High School math teacher Ron Christopherson said, "You made the kids (and the rest of us) feel like royalty!"

The event was coordinated by Joann Marshall and Rebecca Walker, WTS Communication.

"Go Figure" identifies young people with talent in mathematics. The exam was sponsored by SNL last fall.

— Submitted by Bart Buell, SNL-CPG



SNL-CPG's Paul Shoemaker is pictured with a student honoree.

Striving for perfection

WIPP is the first of its kind with a unique set of opportunities and issues. Project success depends on increasing certification, shipping and disposal rates to capacity-level, along with decreased costs related to inefficiency. To get there, management turned to Six Sigma.

What is Six Sigma? A data-driven, problem-solving business management approach where process inputs and variables are identified and optimized to improve outputs. Simply put, sigma is a statistical term that measures how far a given process deviates from perfection. Once the defects are known, one can systematically figure out how to eliminate them.

Six Sigma is not a new idea. Originally developed by Motorola, the process has been successfully adopted by industry giants: General Electric, Dow Chemical, Microsoft, Texas Instruments and IBM.

WIPP's Six Sigma initiative began in late 2004 when a team of Savannah River Site experts came to analyze WIPP work processes and develop a plan for program implementation. The experts began working with 15 WIPP employees last week.



Six Sigma training is broken down into specific functional programs and each successive program is more in depth. The two-week training began with Champions training followed by Yellow Belt training. To ensure program support, awareness training was offered to senior management.

"This is the first step," said Chuck Conway, WTS Six Sigma Deployment Champion. "There is some hard work to be done, but the benefits will be far reaching."

Six Sigma Champions are generally individuals who are responsible for projects specific to them. Yellow Belts are SMEs who oversee the day-to-day activities of those projects. Additional Six Sigma levels include Black Belt: experts on Six Sigma approach methods, and Master Black Belt, considered *the* Six Sigma experts. Black Belts, such as those from SRS, consult on program start-up to ensure a smooth beginning.

Upon completing the two-week training, WIPP will have five Champions, nine Yellow Belts and one Deployment Champion, who is responsible for overall Six Sigma activity at WIPP.



Six Sigma team members listen as trainer Ed Urbanawiz explains applications for the Six Sigma process.

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Ask the computer guy

Question:

Occasionally, when I boot my PC, I get a pop-up window stemming from my task list that notes, "new updates are ready to install." Is it appropriate to install these?

Answer:

Yes. Microsoft has been releasing updates on the average of about two to three every week. In an effort to keep WIPP's computer environment secure, ETSG downloads the updates to verify their applicability. The download is tested and a notice is sent in the form of an icon in your system tray.

When you receive the pop-up, this lets you know that there is a new update released that you need to install.

To install the update, simply click on it. Note that some updates require the computer to be restarted, so perform this when it is best for you.

You have about three days to respond before the update is automatically performed.

Ten ways to pain-free work

Got pain? We hope not, but whether you sit behind a desk or work in the underground, certain movements performed regularly can lead to injury. John Doherty, WTS Safety & Health, recently performed an ergonomic survey of more than 400 workstations. His purpose was to identify issues and correct them before they caused a problem. Here are Doherty's top ten tips and tricks for a pain-free computer workstation.

- 1. Get up close and personal!** Move your chair right up under the desktop or keyboard tray so that you can sit back in your chair and let the chair support your shoulders while keying. Pull that monitor up close so you your shoulders won't slouch, forcing your neck forward to see the screen.
- 2. Get the right fit!** Get a chair that is sized to fit you, and that comfortably fits the way you sit. Short? Get a footrest.
- 3. No straight-arming!** This is not football. Reaching out and mousing with a straight arm can aggravate elbow tendonitis and can cause neck and shoulder issues. Put your mouse/trackball where you can use it with your elbow/forearm resting on something.
- 4. Mess with that chair!** All those levers and knobs under your chair were put there for you to USE. Play with those knobs and levers until you know what each does, and use them to change positions during the day.
- 5. Master the keyboard tray.** The keyboard should be flat or slightly angled away from the user to minimize wrist flex. Ask for help with your particular model if you are unfamiliar with the adjustments.
- 6. Flying blind?** Can't see the screen? Is it the screen, or your eyes? Fix the problem before it leads to musculoskeletal problems.
- 7. Take five.** Or three or two minutes every hour or so. Research shows that employees that take regular, reasonable breaks are more productive than those who don't. Really! And, you will feel better at the end of the day.
- 8. Gone numb?** That numb and tingly feeling is nerve involvement, and needs to be addressed, now! Call Health Services at Extension 8997.
- 9. Get a Life!** Fly a computer all day, then work at your home computer in the evening? Day after day? Forgotten what your family and friends look like? Try to get away from the computer for at least a few hours a day.
- 10. Play!** And that doesn't mean computer games! Find some form of game, sport or activity that is fun for you, and do it, two to three times a week, if possible. Moderate regular physical activity makes your body more tolerant of the hours spent in front of the computer.

Tips and tricks provided by John Doherty, WTS Safety & Health.

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No- or low-cost, ways to save energy

Here are some no- or low-cost ideas that can help you save energy and money at home:

Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents.

Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.

Use your microwave instead of a conventional electric range or oven.

Turn off your computer and monitor when not in use.

Plug home electronics, such as TVs and VCRs, into power strips and turn power strips off when equipment is not in use.

Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater; 115° is comfortable for most uses.

Take showers instead of baths to reduce hot water use.

Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.

– Excerpted in part from
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Energy Efficiency
and Renewable Energy

http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumerinfo/saveenergy/save_nocost.html

No longer the new kid on the block

WTS Safety Manager Craig Herndon is no longer WIPP's new kid on the block. After just a few weeks on the job, Herndon relinquished that title to the new WTS management team. The title didn't really fit the 17-year veteran of safety, health and crisis management programs anyway and now that he's settling in at WIPP, he's providing a fresh perspective to safety at WIPP.

Q: Has the level of safety at WIPP met your pre-arrival expectations?

A: I would say the level of safety at WIPP definitely exceeded my pre-arrival expectations. During a November 2004 visit, I was impressed with the safety culture at the site. There were several people who emphasized safety, not knowing safety was my main focus. It didn't matter who I was or what position I had, they were just looking out for my safety.

Q: How does WIPP safety compare to safety at other sites where you've been?

A: The work being performed presents different hazards from the sites I was responsible for, but safety is basically safety, no matter what type of industry you are working. Hard hats are hard hats, safety glasses are safety glasses and fall protection is fall protection, whether you are working with nuclear material or building an automotive plant.

Here at WIPP the employees are well trained on the hazards of the job and exhibit knowledge of how to mitigate those hazards. With a Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate of 0.91 it shows that WIPP's entire workforce is committed to working safe. However, even that rate is too high. Our goal is "zero times three." Zero recordable injuries, zero environmental incidents, zero serious incidents.

Q: What is your highest priority in your first six months on the job?

A: To do whatever it takes to ensure that the three zeros are achieved. We must not hurt anyone on our site, we must not endanger the environment and we must not have a serious incident. When (and I say when, not if) we reach "zero," we will have achieved a level of safety where we need to be. When we reach this level of safety WIPP will be the leader for all DOE sites.

Craig Herndon at a glance

Experience - 17 years of experience in safety, health and crisis management programs; 14-year veteran of Washington Group International

Education - B.A. in political science from the University of South Carolina. M.S. in safety and environmental management from West Virginia University.

Safety honors - Certified safety professional and holds professional memberships in the American Society of Safety Engineers and the National Safety Council.

Family - Craig and his wife, Robbin, have been married for 19 years. They have two daughters, Stephanie, 15, and Amanda, 11.



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WIPP employees reach out to elementary schools



WIPP radiological engineers Hung-Cheng Chiou (left), and Tom Goff (right), joined Kim Greer of WTS Communication to judge the fourth and fifth grade science fair at Hillcrest Elementary school. The judges chose overall and first through third place winners for each grade.



WTS mine ventilation engineer, Jill Farnsworth, encourages Puckett Elementary students to consider a career in engineering.



Birthdays

- Darren Easley (WTS) - February 25
- Jim Schuetz (CTAC) - February 26
- Veronica Waldram (CBFO) - February 26
- Meg Milligan (CBFO) - February 27
- Chuan-Fu Wu (CBFO) - March 1
- Mark Crawley (WRES) - March 3
- Robert Garcia (WTS) - March 6
- Steve Bartlett (ETSG) - March 7



In Memoriam

The WIPP family expresses sincere condolences to WTS team member John Giblin and his family on the recent loss of John's wife, Beth.



Leaving

Kent Aveson (WTS) has accepted a position in Elko, Nevada. Kent's last day at WIPP will be March 3.

Sue Sleeman (WTS) will be leaving WIPP effective March 10. Sue has enjoyed working here and wishes all the best to her fellow employees.



On the move

WTS Accounting, Payroll, Procurement, Purchasing and Property offices have relocated to the Skeen-Whitlock Building. The new mail-stops for these groups are:

- Accounting and Payroll: GSA-206
- Purchasing and Procurement: GSA-207
- Property: GSA-203

Hayes earns CHP certification



Dr. Robert Hayes (WTS) has received certification from the American Board of Health Physics.

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